Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend paragraph beginning at page 2, line 18 as follows:

Illustrative period-art vendor websites have been developed by the Kirkey Products Group of Longwood, Florida. These systems, ~~described in greater detail at~~ ~~http:// www.buyproduce.com,~~ are designed for use by one specific vendor such as a grower, packer, shipper, sales organization, and/or broker. Such systems provide sales management, packinghouse management, gift fruit shipping, caretaking/farm management, general ledger, accounts payable, and payroll functions for that vendor, based upon the specific requirements of that vendor's business operation. Kirkey's system are geared to handle a specific vendor's own unique way of doing business, as stated on the Products/Services web page, and are not intended to provide uniformity from vendor to vendor. Accordingly, they tend to exacerbate the problems as described above, whereby buyers must learn to deal with a multiplicity of unique vendor websites, each with its own peculiar operational characteristics, ordering sequences, and logon procedures.

Please amend paragraph beginning at page 3, line 8 as follows:

Another illustrative prior art system ~~is described at http:// www.produceb2b.com. This system~~ presents users with access to one of a plurality of industry-specific web pages based upon selection of a predetermined business category from an online menu. One of these industry-specific web pages pertains to produce, and another to dairy products. These web pages do not bring together individual vendors and buyers, but rather function as an industry-specific online trade journal or newsletter. For example, the produce page contains produce-related news that is

updated every 30 minutes. Several online calculation tools are provided to implement

calculations related to the produce industry, and several online business forms are provided to

assist in typical commercial transactions related to the purchase and sale of product. A list of

upcoming trade shows and events is provided, and various produce-related stock prices are

tracked. However, this system does not implement commercial transactions between buyers and

vendors.

Please amend paragraph beginning at page 3, line 21 as follows:

Yet another prior art Internet-based commerce system is <u>a verticalnet system</u> ~~described at~~

~~http:// www.verticalnet.com~~. The verticalnet system reduces the procurement cost of a specific

buyer organization by allowing individual buyers to make buying decisions governed by the

organization's procurement rules. The system operates in the context of a specific buyer

organization, and places limitations on the manner in which buyers can interact with already-

existing vendor websites. The foregoing problems with respect to lack of uniformity among

vendor websites are not addressed -- the buyer must still deal with a multiplicity of widely

divergent vendor websites. In essence, the verticalnet system functions as a "guard" or

gatekeeper, preventing the buyer from performing a function that is not permitted under the

organization's procurement rules. The remainder of the vendor-buyer interaction proceeds as

usual, pursuant to conventional Internet-based systems.

Please amend paragraph beginning at page 4, line 10 as follows:

Still another prior-art system for facilitating Internet commerce is <u>a ChemConnect system</u>

~~described at hhtp:\\chemconnect.com~~. ChemConnect is an online marketplace which provides

commercial buyers with access to thousands of products. Some of these products are auctioned off in a virtual "corporate trading room". A virtual "commodities floor" provides a secure trading area for the buying and selling of standard, high-volume commodity chemicals and plastics. Another feature, termed "Envera", automates the actual order fulfillment, logistics, monitoring and tracking process. However, Envera is not integrated with ChemConnect's online marketplace features.

Please amend paragraph beginning at page 17, line 16 as follows:

Figs. 3A-3E together comprise a flowchart setting forth an operational sequence for facilitating transaction between buyers and vendors using a single business-to-business Internet portal (Fig. 1, 102). The operational sequence commences at block 301 where a buyer uses an Internet-enabled computing device (such as buyer company "A" first computing device 116 shown in Fig. 1) to access business-to-business Internet portal (Fig. 1, 102) over the Internet (Fig. 1, 100). The business-to-business Internet portal may be accessed, for example, by typing a URL (Universal Resource Locator) into an Internet browser program executed by the Internet-enabled computing device. This URL corresponds to the web address of the business-to-business Internet portal, ~~an illustrative example of which is http://www.karibex.com~~.